

# What Do Lesson Records Have To Do With Effective Reading Recovery Teaching?

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One of the hallmarks of Reading Recovery instruction is ongoing, accurate, and useful record keeping. Reading Recovery teachers maintain extensive records of their assessment and instructional activities in order to document each individual's progress and to make reports to parents, classroom teachers, administrators, and the National Data Evaluation Center. Clay (1993) provides Reading Recovery teachers with several important reminders about the process and content of lesson records:

Teachers need to make clear Lesson Records of how the child responds to teaching in each of the components of the lesson. It is important to begin with the first lesson as you will gradually get used to recording what you did and how the child responded (p. 14).

The processes of creating, maintaining, and reviewing lesson records throughout each student's program provide Reading Recovery teachers with their own self-monitoring devices and ways of framing teaching decisions that serve to keep each individual student's Reading Recovery program on target. These processes ensure that the teaching remains on the cutting edge of the child's strengths and needs, thereby creating the conditions for accelerated progress. Close observation, note taking, preplanning of lessons, and the writing of comments—carried out in combination with behind-the-glass sessions, re-reading of the *Guidebook*, and school and cluster visits with colleagues—are ways that teachers work to keep their teaching in line with Reading Recovery procedures and theory.

The purpose of this article is to examine the ways in which one Reading Recovery teacher's use of lesson records supported her ability to teach effectively. Included are lesson records for two different Reading Recovery students taken by Sarah, an experienced and successful Reading Recovery teacher. They are included to show how lesson records fulfill a number of important purposes:

- planning for effective instruction,
- documenting observations of students' literacy behaviors,
- monitoring students' progress,

- reflecting on the effectiveness of the instruction,
- adjusting the instruction for more accelerated learning on a moment-by-moment basis and across each child's program, and
- maintaining a record of change over time in each child's literacy development.

The discussion of these crucial purposes for lesson records is linked within this article to Reading Recovery teachers' professional development in the areas of (a) their self-control and self-regulation, (b) their internalization of the theory and procedures of Reading Recovery teaching, and (c) their self-efficacy.

## Self-Control and Self-Regulation of Instruction

The teacher's success in effectively aligning her teaching moves with each student's current understandings and needs is at the heart of Reading Recovery teaching. Changing our own teaching behaviors in light of this principle of responsive teaching, however, is a difficult and ongoing task. Knowing in general terms what instruction is needed does not ensure that teachers will, in fact, be able to act accordingly. Even when teachers are in possession of useful and accurate *declarative knowledge* (knowing that students need to learn how to match one-to-one for example), *proce-*

WRITING									
TASK	CONSTRUCTING WORDS AND FLUENCY PRACTICE								
<p>[Underlined words or parts of words show where Bridget wrote independently. The slashes indicate where the sentence was later cut for the cut-up story task.]</p> <p><u>I</u>   <u>like</u>   <u>to</u>   eat  </p> <p>fried   eggs   every  </p> <p><u>day</u>   <u>with</u>   <u>my</u>  </p> <p><u>dad.</u>  </p>	<p>T</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>e</td> <td>a</td> <td>t</td> </tr> </table> <p>1 2</p> <p>Wrote quickly, in sequence, and independently. The teacher added the <i>a</i>.</p> <p>T T</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>f</td> <td>r</td> <td>i</td> <td>e</td> <td>d</td> </tr> </table> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>Bridget solved the word in sequence, quickly and confidently. She needed the teacher's articulation for the /r/ sound. Bridget pronounces fried as "fied" eggs in her own speech. She may be ready for letter boxes.</p> <p><u>da</u></p> <p>day</p> <p>Bridget wrote da quickly and independently. The teacher commented, "Yes, like you would do it in the boxes. And there's a quiet ..." Bridget quickly responded, "E!" The teacher replied: "Yes, but this time it's a Y."</p> <p>day</p> <p>Bridget wrote this word 5 times on the practice page, quickly and independently each time. She said that she knows it now!</p> <p>my</p> <p>Bridget wrote my as mY the first 3 times, and formed the word slowly. After 6 repetitions, she began to write with more automaticity.</p>	e	a	t	f	r	i	e	d
e	a	t							
f	r	i	e	d					

Figure 1. Sarah's notes on taking words to fluency during story writing.

*dural knowledge* (knowing how to teach for this behavior), and *conditional knowledge* (knowing when and why such teaching would be appropriate; Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983), they sometimes find it difficult to carry out Reading Recovery teaching in the specific ways needed by each student and as described in the *Guidebook*.

Sarah knew that her student Bridget needed to gain control over a bank of known words for writing. Sarah was also aware of the specific Reading Recovery teaching procedures that address this need, as well as when it would be appropriate to carry out these teaching procedures. Yet when she reviewed her lesson records for the story writing portion of Bridget's lessons over time, she noticed that she

frequently did not have Bridget practice writing particular words on the practice page with an eye to the development of fluent production. To adjust for this difficulty, Sarah found that a brightly colored Post-it note, reminding herself to take words to fluency (placed prominently on the writing portion of the lesson record each day), helped her to actually use this teaching procedure within each lesson. To further monitor her own teaching decisions, Sarah also decided to return to her lesson record shortly after each lesson, circle each word actually taken to fluency, mark the number of times the child wrote each word, and add a brief comment about the degree of fluency the child achieved for that word (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> This extended attention to taking words to fluency assisted Sarah in achieving a self-determined, short-term goal for her teaching. By making shifts in the way she planned her lessons, documented Bridget's behavior, and reflected on her instruction, Sarah was able to alter her instructional behavior to more closely match the procedures described in the *Guidebook*. Sarah's use of her lesson records, then, played an important role in her efforts to control her own teaching behavior for improved instruction.

In order to achieve effective teaching for each individual child, Reading Recovery teachers can construct reminders for key points at which they want to improve their teaching across each lesson. The preplanning of the teaching steps for the new book introduction, for example, is essential for an effective lesson. Clay states that

<sup>1</sup> The notes displayed in Figures 1 through 6 are presented in an extended format in order to clarify points made in the article. Typically, it is much more feasible for lesson records to be written in a briefer format with incomplete sentences or abbreviations.

Reading Recovery teachers generally need to provide an orientation to “*the story, the plot, the words, the sentences and the writing style [sic]*” (1993, p. 37). Where the teaching needs to improve from past lessons by, for example, the identification of “one or two new and important words in the text after he [the student] has said what letter he would expect to see at the beginning” (p. 37), a preplanned, bright, and colorful note to this effect written in the lesson records is very helpful. The actual words “what letter would you expect to see at the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_,” written in red ink for that lesson, can help the teacher to utilize this teaching procedure in a targeted and precise manner.

Reflecting on what actually is a new and important word is also an important part of this planning process. For her new book introduction of *Look for Me* (Melser, 1998), for example, Sarah needed to decide on the best choice of words to ask Bridget to predict and locate. Sarah first reviewed Bridget’s writing vocabulary chart, recent lesson records, and running records for evidence of any points of difficulty as well as the type and level of support needed by Bridget for problem solving during text reading. Sarah also spent time reflecting on what might make a word important, both within this specific text and in order to help Bridget expand her working systems for literacy. Having chosen the words *she* and *him* for this task, Sarah then carefully observed and wrote comments about how her student responded to these tasks (see Figure 2). Bridget was able to predict and locate the word *she* easily, but had some difficulty doing so for the word *him*. As indicated in the lesson notes, Bridget stated that she would expect to see an *h* at the beginning of the

READING	
NEW TEXT	
<p><i>Look for Me</i> Level 5.</p> <p><u>Main Idea Statement:</u>* Mom looked for David in lots of different places.</p> <p><u>Language structure to practice:</u>* No, he’s not here, she said. Bridget needed several repetitions, with strong teacher emphasis on the words <i>he’s not</i> before she could repeat this pattern independently.</p> <p><u>Predict and Locate:</u>* What letters would you expect to see at the beginning of the word <i>she</i>?</p> <p>She Bridget said <i>SH</i> right away and located <i>she</i> very quickly. Easy!</p> <p>Him • Bridget said <i>H</i> easily but located the word <i>here</i> in the text. • The teacher asked: Does it look like him? • Bridget quickly looked in the text again, located the word <i>him</i>, and said “I hear the <i>M</i>.”</p>	

\* This reflects one teacher’s preplanning for her new book orientation to *Look for Me*. It is not a set introduction but is planned for this child.

Figure 2. Sarah’s planned orientation to the new text, at Level 5.

word *him* but identified *here* in the text instead. Sarah then asked her, “Does it look like *him*?” In response to this prompt, Bridget then correctly located the word *him* and stated, “I hear the *m*.”

The process of creating and reflecting on these notes of the child’s responses to the teaching moves and tasks of the lesson helped Sarah to understand over time in what ways and to what degree Bridget was constructing an

effective literacy processing system. Sarah observed, for example, that it may have been unnecessary to have Bridget predict and locate the word *she*, both because it was a very easy task and because Bridget had no difficulty identifying this word during her first reading of the text. Sarah’s scaffolding of Bridget’s location of the word *him*, however, helped Bridget to understand several critical features of this task, including monitoring

whether or not the located word looked right given the letters and sounds expected. This type of instructional conversation (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990) is a powerful way to help a child construct effective and efficient working systems for literacy.

Learning occurs in a context of social interactions leading to understanding. Learners are active risk takers who accept challenges and understand how and why to learn. They are given opportunities to restructure information in ways that make sense to them. Learners connect new material with their previously known information. They generate questions and comments as information becomes internalized (Roehler & Cantlon, 1997, p. 8).

Lesson records, then, can certainly help teachers control their own teaching behaviors through preplanning, note taking, and reflecting. In contrast to self-control, self-regulation refers to the individual teacher's capacity to plan, guide, and monitor his or her own behavior "from within and flexibly according to changing circumstances" (Diaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams, 1990, p. 130). The processes of creating and reviewing lesson records play an important role in the development over time of self-regulation for teaching. Although all Reading Recovery lessons are organized around a common set of tasks, teachers need to "make maximum use of the existing response repertoire of each child, and hence each child's lessons would be different" (Clay, 2001, p. 225). Clay describes a complex set of decisions carried out by teachers for each individual lesson, including the astute selection and judicious sharing

of tasks. "The essential feature of this programme is that teachers remain responsive to leaps forward, or confusions and regressions that emerge during the teaching of a particular child" (Clay, 1993, p. 19).

Reading Recovery teachers operate on a complex theory of working systems for literacy learning consisting of a set of interacting processes. Low achievers typically encounter multiple sources of difficulty, and Clay (1998) cautions Reading Recovery teachers to reject a belief in any one single cause for the reading and writing difficulties of low achievers:

Low achievement may arise from lack of learning opportunities, or because the child chose to attend to other things, or because a child has the fine motor skill and language level of a much younger child. Life events and crises in the pre-school or early school years may also contribute to low achievement....Multiple causation makes it highly unlikely that a prescribed sequence of instruction would suit all children with low literacy achievement (p. 225).

The lesson format for Reading Recovery teaching is designed to break each student's particular "cycle of interacting deficits" (Clay, 2001, p. 220). Marie Clay wrote that this broad goal is accomplished using

- "one-to-one instruction,
- with teaching activities selected to meet individual needs,
- paced and sequenced individually,
- delivered by a well-trained teacher
- *who keeps good records* [italics added],

- is alert to all aspects of the *pupil's learning history* [italics added] during this second chance to learn,
- and adapts daily to ensure the construction of effective processing at all times despite the not-so-balanced repertoire of the struggling learner" (Clay, 2001, pp. 220–221).

Lesson records, then, should help Reading Recovery teachers stay alert to all aspects of the student's learning history, enabling them to adapt their teaching on a daily basis with the explicit goal of helping the student construct an effective and efficient processing system for literacy. This process of adaptation to the needs of each Reading Recovery student is an ongoing program-by-program, lesson-by-lesson, and minute-by-minute challenge: it requires that teachers be able to self-regulate their teaching moves.

As teachers observe students' responses, preplan lessons, and write and review lesson notes, they increase their capacity to plan, guide, and monitor their own behavior flexibly across and within lessons. Planning and note taking provide cognitive structures that frame teachers' thinking about Reading Recovery teaching and about the current responses of the individual child. Tharp and Gallimore (1993) define cognitive structuring as assisting "by providing explanatory and belief structures that organize and justify" or as "the provision of a structure for thinking and acting" (p. 63). Clay (1993) asks Reading Recovery teachers not only to write down what the teacher did, but also how the child responded to the teaching and to the tasks. Teachers can use lesson records, for example, both to make themselves

more aware of and to use more precise language to introduce the current task for the linking of sound sequence with letter sequence. For the preplanning of a making and breaking activity, listen carefully to the way the child talks about words and letters, and think hard about how to help the child construct “links between *how the child analyses the sounds of words he needs to write or words he anticipates in his reading texts, and how the child analyses the letters and letter clusters in a word in his reading against the word he is trying to say [sic]*” (Clay, 1993, p. 44).

For one of Bridget’s lessons (see Figure 3), Sarah preplanned her instructional language at the top of the Letter Identification/Making and Breaking column of her lesson record. She then noted Bridget’s responses to the tasks and whether Bridget was able to work (a) only with support, (b) independently but slowly and hesitantly, or (c) with flexibility and fluency. These observations and her analysis of Bridget’s patterns of responding (Estice, 1997) led Sarah to write notes in the Comment section (see Figure 4, next page) of the lesson record concerning her current, tentative understanding of Bridget’s understanding of the Making and Breaking tasks, as well as reminders to adapt the teaching appropriately. These observations and her reflection on her instructional decisions led Sarah to modify her teaching for the next day’s Making and Breaking tasks, putting a stronger emphasis on Bridget’s ability to use what she already knew to get to new words.

Notes written in the Comment column of lesson records should be held tentatively, subject to verification or revision based on further evidence

	1 LETTER IDENTIFICATION 2 MAKING AND BREAKING
	<p>[Instructional language planned:] -&gt; We’re going to start with words you know, and then change the first letter to make a new word. -&gt; You know <i>cat</i>. If I change the first letter, I can make a new word.</p> <p>Known word <i>cat</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher changed the <i>c</i> to form <i>mat</i>. Bridget then read the new word easily and accurately.</li> <li>• The teacher changed <i>cat</i> to <i>rat</i>. Bridget read the new word easily and accurately.</li> <li>• Bridget completes this type of task easily with minimal teacher support</li> </ul> <p>Known word <i>me</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridget formed and read <i>me</i> easily. The teacher asked: What word like that could you make?</li> <li>• Bridget responded, “<i>cat</i>.”</li> <li>• The teacher modeled the task, asking “How about <i>we? he? be?</i>”</li> <li>• Bridget picked <i>we</i> and quickly took off the <i>m</i> and changed <i>me</i> to <i>we</i> with no further teacher modeling. She read this new word easily.</li> <li>• Bridget needed teacher support for the task of generating the new word, but handled the task well after the new word had been stated by the teacher.</li> </ul>

Figure 3. Sarah’s planned activities for making and breaking.

from the analysis of observable behaviors. These comments, however, serve the important purpose of helping teachers maintain a focus on change over time for each child throughout his or her lessons. Just as for predictions of progress, such comments on a child’s overall patterns of response “help a teacher keep a long-term perspective on her day-to-day decisions” (Clay, 1993, p. 12). Teachers can include enough information to usefully reflect, both during and after each lesson, on such questions as:

- Why might the learner have responded in the way that he or she did? What does the learner appear to understand at this point in time concerning the linking of sound sequence with letter sequence?
- What was the learner’s purpose? What does he or she seem to want to learn about linking sound sequence with letter sequence?
- What was the specific context in which the student’s

COMMENT	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridget is not easily able to generate words verbally that have the same rime but a different onset.</li> <li>• Check to see whether Bridget seems to be linking sound sequence with letter sequence as she works in making and breaking tasks.</li> <li>• It may be useful to alter the emphasis in the teaching for making and breaking from “change the first letter to make a new word” towards getting her to think about what she knows that can help her get to new words.</li> <li>• It may be helpful to briefly go back to the making and breaking of known words: Look at the word. Say it slowly and run your finger under it.</li> </ul>

Figure 4. Sarah's reflective comments on the child's progress in making and breaking.

responses occurred? What characteristics of your teaching may have caused the student to respond as he or she did? What language did you actually use to describe the activities?

As teachers utilize questions such as these to guide their observation of students' responses to instruction and plan instruction based upon their ongoing observation, they engage in processes which are likely to assist in the development of self-regulation of

teaching. They increase their capacity to plan, guide, and monitor their own behavior flexibly and in response to each student's current understandings of reading and writing processes.

### Internalizing the Theory and Teaching Procedures of Reading Recovery

The ability to write down the key aspects of “what you did and how the child responded” (Clay, 1993, p. 14) requires Reading Recovery teachers to think deeply about the student's litera-

cy learning in light of Clay's theories. This reiterative cycle of (a) reflection on theory and procedures, (b) planning, (c) observing behavior, (d) adjustment of instruction, and then (e) further analysis and planning helps teachers internalize the theory and procedures of Reading Recovery. The analysis of each child's running record, for example, provides information essential to the teaching decisions for each individual child. Teachers' analysis of the daily running record should serve as a check on the accuracy of their current assumptions about the child's current ways of working on text:

What if a reliable behaviour record does not support expectations? Unable to deny that the actual behaviour did occur we probably need to adjust any of our assumptions that are not supported by recorded data. So it is important that we have reliable records (Clay, 2002, p. 72).

The daily analysis of running records includes, but also goes beyond, the calculation of the child's accuracy and self-correction ratio through a careful and accurate lesson-by-lesson analysis of the source or sources of information used by the child for every single error and self-correction (Clay, 2002, p. 69). This process includes (a) analyzing miscues, (b) consideration of the child's pattern of responses when reading text independently, and (c) the writing of a thoughtful and accurate summary statement about the sources of information used and neglected on every running record.

As Bridget moved into Level 11, for example, Sarah carefully preplanned her orientation to the new story, *Ten Little Bears* (Ruwe, 1976). As shown in Figure 5, Sarah introduced Bridget

to several key aspects of this text. Like most texts at the higher levels, *Ten Little Bears* is a complex text for which Sarah judged that Bridget would need several particular kinds of support in order to be well prepared to read the text as independently as possible. As Reading Recovery teachers, we need to realize that many texts at higher levels have complex plots or multiple unfamiliar terms and concepts that may need explanation. Rather than withdrawing their support at higher text levels, teachers should continue to provide appropriate support:

Independence is fostered by teaching throughout children's programs and support must happen when children are reading in the upper levels of text. It is at those levels that children are developing a greater depth of visual processing which must continue to be integrated with their use of meaning and structure cues for their successful discontinuing and maintenance of gains (Kelly & Neal, 1998, p. 1).

Bridget's running record for *Ten Little Bears* was scored at 97% accuracy, with a self-correction ratio of 1:3 and strong phrasing and fluency. Bridget had some continuing difficulty with the word *then* throughout the text, and Sarah asked her to check to see that the word choice *then* would sound right and look right. Sarah also had Bridget practice writing this new and important word to fluency. Bridget made three fluency-influenced errors on the familiar words *a* and *the*, which Sarah did not call her attention to. Sarah's summary statement on Bridget's running record demonstrated her thorough analysis of the sources of information used and neglected by

Bridget: "Meaning used predominantly for her substitutions with some attention to initial visual information. Repetition and more visual information led to three self-corrections."

When the running record summary statement accurately and completely describes a child's use or neglect of sources of information, and this does not change significantly across multiple lessons, this lack of shift in the child's use of information sources

should remind teachers to reflect on where adjustment in teaching decisions may be necessary. Some useful questions for Reading Recovery teachers to ask about their teaching could be

- What were the characteristics of my teaching interventions during this lesson? Did I intervene too often?
- Have I taught in ways that lifted the student's pace of

READING	
NEW TEXT	
<p><i>Ten Little Bears</i> Level 11.</p> <p><u>Main Idea Statements:</u>*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a counting book.</li> <li>• It tells what each little bear did and how many bears were left at home each time.</li> <li>• Let's see what the last little bear wants to do at the end of the story.</li> </ul> <p><u>Language structure to practice:</u>*</p> <p>Then nine little bears were left at home. Bridget tended to omit the word <i>then</i>. She needed to hear the teacher's emphasis on this word each time she practiced the pattern. The teacher gave a brief explanation of what <i>then</i> means here: The story is counting. It tells that nine little bears were left after the first one found something interesting to do.</p> <p><u>Unfamiliar terms:</u>*</p> <p>jeep jets</p> <p><u>Predict and Locate:</u>*</p> <p>soon Bridget said S-O-O right away and located <i>soon</i> very quickly. Easy!</p> <p>were Bridget did not verbally identify the <i>W</i> but quickly located <i>were</i> in the text. She then stated, "Like her."</p>	

\* This reflects one teacher's preplanning for her new book orientation to *Ten Little Bears*. It is not a set introduction but is planned for this child.

Figure 5. Sarah's planned orientation to the new text, at Level 11.

READING		
	REREADING	STRATEGIES 1 USED 2 PROMPTED
	[Preplanned:] -> Don't let him point with his finger. -> Do you know a word that starts with those letters? -> Check it! Does it look right and sound right to you?  <i>Where is Miss Pool?</i> Level 6   <i>The Three Bears</i> Level 6   <i>The Hungry Kitten</i> Level 6	   2 The teacher prompted him to not use a finger three times and pulled his finger away once. 2 I liked the way you found out what was wrong all by yourself. ..... 2 The teacher prompted twice for no finger pointing 1 Jonathan read with voice and head pointing, word by word 2 Were you right? Try that again and think what would make sense. ..... 2 The teacher prompted once for no finger pointing 1 Jonathan read mostly word by word, with some thumb pointing 1 Jonathan read with some phrasing: said the boy went away 1 Substitutions: here was hello went

Figure 6. Sarah's planned reminders and notes for rereading of familiar texts and strategies used or prompted for.

- learning?
- Did I use the same teaching prompt(s) over and over throughout the lesson?
  - Did I actually teach the student how to monitor, self-correct, or search, or did I just remind him or her to do so?
  - Was my language of instruction consistent with both the teaching procedures in the *Guidebook* and the theory underlying Reading Recovery

instruction?

Lesson records must contain enough information across each child's program to allow teachers to reflect accurately on these kinds of issues.

The lesson notes for Jonathan's Lesson #11 in the Rereading and Strategies Used/Prompted columns (see Figure 6) allowed Sarah to keep her focus on two important areas that were essential to early accelerated progress: confirming or discounting possible word

choices using all sources of information and reading entire texts with independence, phrasing, and fluency. The teacher used her lesson record to remind herself to be persistent in prompting Jonathan to stop using his finger to point to words, as well as to provide support for his use of meaning, structure, and visual cues. During her preplanning for the lesson, Sarah wrote three reminders and prompts from the *Guidebook* at the top of the Rereading column which she felt would be especially valuable for her work with Jonathan that day. To distinguish these from her notes of the prompting that she actually used during the lesson, Sarah put arrows in front of these preplanned prompts.

Sarah also wanted to ensure that she was not interrupting Jonathan's reading of familiar texts with teaching points and that her teaching points were precisely delivered and thus powerful in helping Jonathan to achieve shifts in his reading behaviors. She carefully noted the strategies that she observed Jonathan using independently with the code 1, and the strategies she prompted Jonathan to use with the code 2 in the Strategies column for this lesson. The comments in this column provided a record of Jonathan's strategic processing, and they also provided evidence on which Sarah reflected and adjusted her instruction. Sarah, for example, noted Jonathan's continuing, habitual use of a pointing finger, his transition to word-by-word voice pointing and head nodding, and some phrasing. The points at which Jonathan's self-monitoring broke down, as in his reading of *here* for *hello* in *The Hungry Kitten* (Randell, 1994), were also observed and recorded.

Sarah's purpose for Jonathan's lesson

record was to capture just enough information during the lesson itself so that she would be able to look back after the lesson and analyze for shifts in Jonathan's reading behavior and to plan for needed shifts in her own teaching. She considered ways to use the *Guidebook's* teaching procedures to help Jonathan move towards an integration of the meaning and sound systems of language with a visual analysis of print controlled by directional constraints. This complex goal required a balance in teaching between appropriate prompting for phrased and fluent reading and monitoring behaviors. Sarah's creation and review of Jonathan's lesson records, then, allowed her to fine-tune and build upon her teaching moves and to work to maintain a strong pace of change in Jonathan's literacy behaviors across his program. Sarah's lesson records provided her with opportunities to (a) plan Jonathan's lessons appropriately, (b) document Jonathan's literacy behaviors and monitor his progress over time, and (c) reflect on and adjust her instruction for each individual lesson and across Jonathan's entire program.

### Self-Efficacy and Reading Recovery Teaching

Teachers' confidence in their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) can strongly influence their ability to take effective problem-solving action to help each student move towards discontinuing. "These beliefs affect how much effort people expend, how long they will persist in the face of difficulties, their resilience in dealing with failures, and the stress they experience in coping with demanding situations" (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000, p. 481). When people take responsibility for their actions and ascribe success or

failure to the goals they have chosen for themselves and the effort they have put forth, they are utilizing a sense of personal agency (Paris, Byrnes, & Paris, 2001).

In Reading Recovery teaching, the concepts of self-efficacy and personal agency encompass a foundational belief that teaching can make the difference between a successful student and a failing one. In order to develop a sense of self-efficacy as a Reading Recovery teacher, four factors that promote personal agency should be considered: success, feedback, observational learning, and social persuasion (Paris, Byrnes, & Paris, 2001). With success (e.g., supporting an important shift in a student's literacy behavior) comes feelings of mastery and satisfaction. Feedback supports the development of self-efficacy and goal-setting behaviors through careful observation and notes that demonstrate a student's responses to instruction. Learning from observational and social persuasion contributes to the sense that effective Reading Recovery teaching is truly within reach. Although the observational learning and social persuasion of powerful behind-the-glass sessions and colleague visits are crucial to the development of strong understandings of effective Reading Recovery teaching, teachers can also follow up by providing their own feedback and recognition of success within lesson record keeping. With the setting of goals for themselves—both proximal (close-at-hand) and more complex and difficult goals—Reading Recovery teachers are more likely to implement better and better teaching in recognizable ways.

Based upon her observation of Jonathan's current ways of taking words apart in reading, for example,

Sarah set a goal for an instructional move up the scale of help on page 51 of the *Guidebook* (Clay, 1993). Sarah had observed that Jonathan was able to solve difficult words in texts when the teacher divided the word for him with a masking card. In order to move towards more independence, Sarah gave careful thought to changing her teaching so that Jonathan himself would be able to divide a challenging word in print in order to assist his solving of difficult words. Sarah decided that this goal might be achieved by (a) providing a careful explanation of why and how she was dividing the word, (b) providing a masking card within reach of the child, and (c) using the "helpful questions to prompt solving" listed on page 49 in the *Guidebook*:

- "After success in word solving. Say 'How did you know it was...?'"
- When the child stops at a new word. Say 'What could you try...?' Or 'Do you know a word like that?' Or 'What would you think it could be?' Or 'Do you know a word that starts with those letters?' Or 'What do you know that might help?'"

Setting this specific goal of a successful move up the scale of help required the teacher to think through (a) if and why it was an appropriate goal for Jonathan and how she knew that, (b) what she might need to do (or not do) to ensure that Jonathan both understood this new request and how to accomplish it, and (c) how Sarah would know that her goal was being achieved. Sarah found it useful, for example, to plan and write out the

instructional language that could explain this shift in procedures to Jonathan, and then to carefully note his attempts at this task over time and the level of support needed for success on each occasion. The lesson records for Jonathan, then, indicated that he became able to control this new task more and more effectively, flexibly, and independently over time. When this type of progress does not occur, the teacher needs to either reevaluate the teaching decision itself or ask herself why the student might be finding parts of the task difficult.

### A Summary and Cautions

Engaging in the process of lesson record keeping is an important component of teachers' ongoing learning as Reading Recovery teachers and of their efforts to help each child construct a strong network of working systems for literacy learning. Engaging in a reflective cycle of systematic observation of teaching moves and student responses leads to goal setting and feedback, and it improves teachers' understanding that teaching decisions make a difference for each Reading Recovery student. Clear lesson records provide teachers with accurate evidence of what their teaching moves were and of how the child responded. Lesson records

- differ from teacher to teacher, child to child, and over time.
- provide accurate and reliable information on the child's current ways of responding.
- provide accurate and reliable records of teaching decisions and actions.
- help each teacher format their thinking and decision making in ways that are consistent with Clay's theories of the development of complex

working systems for literacy.

- support each teacher's monitoring and analysis and assist in the adaptation of the standard lesson format to the strengths and needs of individual children across time.
- contribute to each Reading Recovery teacher's sense of self-efficacy.

Several important cautions, however, need to be considered concerning lesson records. The teacher's job during each portion of every Reading Recovery lesson is to teach. Each teacher's attention during lessons should be on the child and his or her ways of responding to literacy tasks. Clay (1993) states that each Reading Recovery teacher will "gradually get used to recording what you did and how the child responded" (p. 14). This noticing and recording is something that Reading Recovery teachers typically become more comfortable, efficient, and flexible with over time. Even very experienced Reading Recovery teachers, however, need to continue to carefully preplan portions of each lesson for each child. These portions of lessons would include the new book introduction, for example, or when and how to accomplish the transitions in Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words procedures from early learning to intermediate steps and advanced learning.

Detailed and intense planning, observing, and documenting of student behavior and monitoring and adjusting the teaching are especially important for any child who is not showing accelerated progress. "There is only one position to take in this case. The programme is not, or has not been, appropriately adapted to the child's needs" (Clay, 1993, p. 56).

Although an appropriate referral to long-term instructional support for a few children is one of the two positive outcomes of Reading Recovery instruction, teachers first need to ask themselves what inaccurate or incomplete assumptions about the child they may be operating from. Clay cautions Reading Recovery teachers to check up on themselves as teacher, on their records of the child's progress, and to closely observe the child's literacy behavior: "Look over your Lesson Records and describe what the succession of learning/failing to learn has been in particular areas. What have your records to say about the things that this child has found difficult?" (p. 57). When working with a hard-to-accelerate student, Clay emphasizes that Reading Recovery teachers need to reflect, using the evidence within their lesson records and from observations as well as the comments from colleagues, on where the child is finding part(s) of the reading process difficult, what aspect of the reading process has not received attention, and to consider dropping the level of text difficulty in many cases.

The overall goal for a teacher's work with a hard-to-accelerate child is to regroup—to fine-tune the teaching based upon careful observation and analysis of the child's current processing systems for literacy, so that the child now begins "to orchestrate the whole process in a more satisfactory way before moving off up the difficulty sequence" (Clay, 1993, p. 57). This intensive approach to getting a hard-to-accelerate child's program back on track requires teachers to delve deeply into the lesson records themselves (and the evidence of student behaviors and teaching decisions on which those lesson records are based).

Some important observations, notes, and comments, however, are made after rather than during the lesson. A teacher might note the teaching moves and the child's responses very briefly during the lesson and then return to the lesson records shortly afterwards for a more complete recording. When the teacher helps the child review the most recent words taken to fluency, for example, it can be helpful to just make a check mark over any words written quickly and easily. The teacher can then go back after the lesson and write further comments concerning any other word or words for which the child needed support, made errors, or wrote slowly and hesitantly. These observations should lead the teacher to reflect on how well teaching for taking words to fluency on the practice page has been working for a particular child and what changes in teaching behavior could improve the child's understanding. It is also useful to regularly audiotape or videotape lessons and review these with a view to close observation of the teaching and the child's responses. Recordings of lessons are good opportunities to add notes and comments to the lesson records beyond what the teacher was able to write during the lesson itself, and these recordings could be especially valuable when working with a hard-to-accelerate child.

Reading Recovery teachers need to remain tentative and flexible in their current understanding of theory, procedures, and the individual child's control over a network of strategic action for text reading and text writing. Teachers risk interfering with a child's progress in literacy acquisition when they get too enamored of any particular theory or belief about a child's strengths or needs. Reading

Recovery teachers appreciate that the processes of learning to read and write are complex rather than stage-like or linear, and they must consciously and deliberately suspend current interpretations in favor of ongoing observation of reading and writing behaviors. Towards these ends, Reading Recovery teachers value and regularly engage in conversations with colleagues about teaching in general and about individual students. These conversations help teachers formulate and reformulate ideas and justify or alter explanations of a student's behaviors (Lyons, Pinnell, & DeFord, 1993). Without these conversations which occur at behind-the-glass sessions and teacher leader and colleague visits, lesson record keeping could move teachers to ineffective Reading Recovery teaching.

Sarah's student Bridget discontinued from Reading Recovery in February, after 51 lessons and with a text level score of 16. Jonathan discontinued in June, after 37 lessons and with a text level score of 18. During the year that she worked with these two students, Sarah taught 10 Reading Recovery students in all. Eight of these students were able to discontinue from Reading Recovery. The processes of (a) planning, (b) documenting behavior lesson by lesson and over time, (c) monitoring students' progress, and (d) reflecting on and adjusting instruction are worth engaging in! The deliberate, accurate, and useful lesson record keeping described in this article keeps Reading Recovery teaching on track in terms of each child's evolving strengths and needs as well as Reading Recovery theory and teaching procedures. Through monitoring and self-regulation of their teaching and the identification and achievement of both immediate and long-term goals for each child's program, Reading

Recovery teachers are able to help most Reading Recovery students develop the set of effective working systems for literacy that will serve them well as lifelong readers and writers.

As Bridget was nearing the end of her Reading Recovery program and she and Sarah were walking together to the Reading Recovery room, Bridget casually commented that she could read. Sarah responded, with some surprise, "Of course you can!" Bridget, however, came to a complete stop and said, stamping one foot for emphasis, "No, I mean I can read. I went over to the shelf and just pulled out the book. I opened it up and just started reading. **I can read!**"

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